

The Eclectic Theosophist

FOLLOWING THE BLAVATSKY AND POINT LOMA TRADITION

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Per Copy 50c

ELSIE BENJAMIN

Elsie Benjamin has gone Home, passed into the unspeakable Peace and Light that men call death. Rather than stereotyped and formal utterance in these pages, perhaps we should merely quote from a letter written to an old friend a few hours after we heard of Elsie's death. I think she would prefer it that way:

"We have just heard that Elsie has passed into the Great Peace she so richly deserves. The end was peaceful, quiet, this 25th of September so near the Equinox, just a slipping away after some days of coma. She died around 6.30 sundown, Greenwich time. She had been briefly ill and was in the hospital in Worthing. Friends with her on two evenings after she was taken there said she was so happy when they visited her, so alert, and they talked of theosophical teaching; and then the next day she lapsed into unconsciousness from which she never recovered.

"Now her work will speak for itself, in the hearts and minds of so very many she has helped through the long years. We shall sorely miss her in her theosophical labors, her delightful humor too, her practical-mindedness, oh so many little things. I had a long correspondence with her. We kept closely in touch. And just think, only a few months ago (at Eastertime) she was lecturing in Berlin—and at the age then of almost 84:

"But, as you rightly say, the Great Work goes on. It cannot be otherwise. And when the time comes for us in turn to step aside and enjoy a good rest, others will come forward. The cyclical times will have their special problems, and so the Work may be carried on in different ways; but the Thought of the Great Ones is ever alive, vibrant, alert, to knowing what is best for this little earth-population, wisely encouraging and stimulating, and helping—if we do our part."

And to another friend: "When I think of Elsie in these later years it is the Humor of life (against the background of Theosophy, of course) that we enjoyed sharing with her almost more than anything else. And how sensible she always was no matter what the problem, how human in her cheerful acceptance of help from understanding friends, how quick and ready herself always to respond to inquiry for something in the way of more light on a theosophical teaching or problem, how one-pointed, how delightful her belief in the endearing human qualities as well as the Big Things in life. Elsie had all these qualities in abundant measure. We loved her for them. They make happy memories, strong links probably for re-association 'next time' ...

"I could go on, but will stop with the long thought of how much she did for the Theosophical Movement in her

position first as private secretary to G. de P., and later in her capacity as Corresponding Secretary of the CFL and editorship of its monthly *Bulletin*. She took down in shorthand every word almost GdeP uttered in the years of his leadership of the Point Loma TS. As a result we have his works, not only those published during his lifetime but many in the following years. What a treasure! How can we truly assess what is owed to Elsie's indefatigable industry!"

And speaking of informality, or rather a natural avoidance of anything smacking of ceremony in the performance of her theosophical studies, we find in this a keynote to understanding the ordering of her work-life. Despite the seriousness of the work, despite her nearness to the one who was the Head, she never indulged in airs of superiority, was never pompous or ostentatious. No matter what the job, she did it without flourish or display. She believed in a minimum of administrative paraphernalia and thus saved herself an enormous amount of time and energy for what she considered more necessary. This swabháva showed itself not only at Point Loma but when she came to live in England. Take for instance her Corresponding Fellows Correspondence Course. She simply felt it was something that had to be done, and so, without spare cash or promise of help, she started it in the dark years of 1944, placing an ad in a magazine. Almost immediately came response. And from that moment, despite exigencies imposed by the war years, the theosophical work she had undertaken prospered and the CFL now has members scattered over the globe. The CFL *Bulletin*, which she soon started was *sui generis*, unique. It spoke out. No timidity, no kowtowing to passing humors of the day, held it back from unfurling the theosophical banner and proclaiming that Theosophy had the answers to today's problems. Her program was carried on with common sense, with consistency, with unflinching enthusiasm, holding ever firmly to what has been called "the Blavatsky tradition", which words were printed on the masthead of the *Bulletin*.

Anyone who knows anything about editing will know what it takes to produce a magazine regularly, month after month, year after year—36 of them! (the first issue was September 27, 1945, its last, Oct.-Nov. 1981.) Oh those deadlines! Elsie met them cheerfully, we may add eagerly, without fail, under who knows fully what difficulties. But for her it was a joy. Readers and students we feel sure recognized this, and their response showed in the always lively give-and-take of "Discussion and Comment" of theosophical teaching not equalled in any other theosophical periodical of the day. (Her last editorial work for Point Loma Publications was her proofing of

her Study No. 8, "Man at Home in the Universe".—See listing in this issue's Items of Interest.)

A further thought. The underlying theme in the *Bulletin*, not overtly stated but weaving itself in and out of its every issue with unremitting emphasis, is the need and the pledge to "keep the link unbroken." This means, as all Theosophists know, preserving and promulgating the Teaching as given by HPB and her own Teachers, keeping it unsullied and pure. That the *Bulletin* did. And coupled with this that HPB taught there was a relating of what GdeP taught 50 years later, in harmony with it, supportive of it, accurately and persuasively elucidative of the Teaching; so that by careful study—reference given and explanation offered—the student may see that what was taught emanates from the School, carries the same indisputable hallmark. This is perhaps the special contribution Elsie Benjamin makes to over-all theosophical thought, attitude, and endeavor. In due time, we feel sure, it will have its effect on world thought and in studies of careful analysis by students and researchers of the future.

An interesting sidelight to this just closed life marked esoterically by association and achievement—private secretary to Katharine Tingley in the latter years of that Leader's life; private secretary to GdeP from 1929 to 1942; then, in England, organizer with her husband of CFL and editor of its *Bulletin* (its 414th issue was its last)—is to note how it was divided almost equally between England and America. Born in May of 1896, she came to the U.S.A., San Diego, California (then a small western town of 18,000 or so, and to Point Loma, almost virgin territory) in the last days of 1900, 3½ years old. She returned to her native soil in May of WW year 1943. Thereafter her home—with forays to the USA and European countries—was her beloved England. Forty-two years in the USA, 42 years in England.

And so a long and dedicated life comes to an end. We speak of 'end', but ends are beginnings, and, as Elsie herself would love to explain—I can feel her enthusiasm, see her eyes alive with the inborn feeling of the truth of it all—the mystery of death not only provides the long and blissful sleep of Devachan for the weary human ego, but it gives opportunity for that higher part of the human constitution called the Spiritual Monad, to experience life of its own as it passes sunward along the Circulations of the Kosmos through the planets of our solar system.

But dissertation is not called for here. Elsie would not want that or a parade of solemnity. A few days before her death we cabled her: *Our Enduring Love is With You*, and the message carried names of old Point Loma friends. Let's leave it at that. It calls to mind Emerson's verse:

*Hearts are dust, heart's loves remain;
Heart's love will meet thee again.*

—W.E.S.

The Truth Has Struck Home

Theosophy is not a preacher of new doctrines, but an interpreter of life as life is; it simply explains to the mind the intuition of the soul.

The change that has come over the public mind on these questions in recent years is most remarkable; everybody notices it. The idea of reincarnation is quite common, and no longer excites the surprise it used to do. This change in thought is unquestionably due to the influence of Theosophy. When what is stated to a person is a truth, then this truth is at once perceived and recognized as such by that person's intuition. He may rebel against it in his mind; he may push it aside and refuse to entertain it. Nevertheless the truth has struck home; a seed has been planted in him, which will one day grow to maturity. Reincarnation, and its accompanying doctrine of Karma, have thus struck home to the public mind.

—H.T. Edge: "Maggie Tulliver"
in Point Loma Publications Study No. 7

ALL PRESENT IN ALEXANDRIA

By the end of the first century, the elements that would form the pivot upon which subsequent Western history would turn were all present in Alexandria. Apollonius of Tyana had taught there and reformed the priestly activities of Egyptian, Greek and Roman religion. There Philo Judaeus had reinterpreted Mosaic philosophy and the religion of the Torah in the light of his profound metaphysical mysticism. Buddhist monks had preached the message of Shakyamuni within its gates, and the *Gospel According to John* was probably written in the city. Though the great library had been ravaged by fire when Julius Caesar first entered Alexandria, it remained the center of Mediterranean scholarship, and the Museum associated with it emerged as an international university that supported scientific experimentation and mathematical philosophy.

Ammonius Saccas entered this area of brilliant intellectual activity and diverse spiritual loyalties to offer a philosophical basis for human solidarity within a context of individual freedom and collective growth. His Eclectic Philosophy, which he named *Theosophy*, pointed to the universal unity of all religions and philosophies, taught the method of analogy and correspondence, and used the Pythagorean-Platonic method to urge disciples towards higher truths through self-devised and self-induced efforts. Ammonius stood outside the Museum as a true philosophical revolutionary, drawing his disciples from those who found their traditional education lacking in spiritual vitality. His closest disciples were not encouraged to remain in Alexandria to found a school or establish a lineage. Rather, they journeyed abroad to transmit his method and

translate it into the philosophies and religions of the Roman *imperium*. Plotinus founded a center in Rome that would eventually reinvigorate the Athenian Academy through Proclus, whose teachers, Plutarch and Syrianus, followed the doctrines of Iamblichus as he had learnt them from Porphyry and he from Plotinus. Origen brought the analogical method and secret doctrines of Ammonius into the Christian community just as it was institutionalizing itself as the church of Rome. Longinus brought the spirit of his work into politics, government and diplomacy. Thus Ammonius left a numinous impression rather than a crystallized institution, and that mark made itself felt with increasing force in the Museum. It eventually sponsored the Alexandrian Academy which became an independent school under Theon and his daughter, Hypatia.

If Ammonius represented that to which the Western world should have remained true, Hypatia represented the moment of choice when many would either heed the Eclectic Philosophy or slide towards spiritual ignorance and moral disintegration. Hypatia was born around A.D. 370 in Alexandria

—Hermes, Aug. 2, 1980, "Hypatia"

Published by U.T.F., Santa Barbara, Calif.

AND WE QUOTE ...

THE MYSTERIOUS POWER OF THOUGHT

The higher members of the Brotherhood of Light deal primarily with *Ideas*, a conception which has nothing to do with ordinary thinking. Ideas are from a certain standpoint the *stoicheias* of ancient Greek mystics, the incorporeal principles of the planetary world, individualized abstractions which are somewhat similar to the Gnostic *Aeons*. It is with them that the most advanced members of the Hierarchy are intimately connected. The jet-streams of the *Âtma-Buddhic* level of global consciousness carry their spiritual currents to any part of the global structure, inner and outer. These currents have to be reduced in their vibratory rates before they can be perceived or attuned to by even the highest portions of mankind. Lesser members of the Brotherhood can do so, as they serve as transformers of the highest energies into somewhat lower levels. Their activity is rooted in the use of *Kriyâśakti*, the mysterious power of thought which enables it to produce external, perceptible, phenomenal results by its own inherent energy.

—Boris de Zirkoff: "The Sun—A Beating Heart!"
in *Theosophia*, Fall 1980

A MEMBERSHIP WHOSE POWER COULD BE FELT

Personally, I'm not too much interested in the Society growing in numbers. I am very much interested in seeing the membership of the Society becoming aware of what its work is, living the kind of life we spoke about that would make the Society into a real nucleus of theo-

sophists, a harmonious group of people who are working to find the truth with an attitude of free and fearless investigation. I mentioned in my Presidential Address at the last convention that H.P.B. said "the root idea of the Society is free and fearless investigation." She also said that the very fact that you are a member means that you are seeking truth. If we had a membership which consisted of people who are really serious, earnest, it would have a tremendous influence on the world. I think it would. The very existence of people who have inquiring minds, who are not apathetic toward the world's condition, or their own condition, would make a big difference. Without our trying to do any specific propaganda, etc., the power of the Society, its influence, will be felt. Even if half our membership were like that, the Society will be an influence in the world, not only externally, but I think spiritually, because it would then be a channel for something greater than ourselves.

—Radha Burnier: Interview with the Editor,
The American Theosophist, Aug-Sept. 1981

CREATION OR EVOLUTION

Generally overlooked in the continuing controversy between the Creationists and the Evolutionists is the fact that neither group offers an adequate explanation for the inner longing for purpose and meaning by human beings. Catherine Roberts, a Platonist who is also a biologist, reproaches those who would limit the moral and spiritual potentialities of man to his apparently animal origins:

"In stressing man's relation to animals and playing down the diversity among living creatures, they are using concepts of democracy and equality. Such profound well-meaning efforts to better the relations between man and the rest of creation do, however, seem to have gone somewhat too far, for to proclaim that man is in no way unique is a distortion of spiritual truth. Man's conscious awareness of his conscience, the divine ethic, and his self-transcendence as a realizable human potential *does* set *Homo sapiens* apart from other creatures. And precisely because of his spiritual uniqueness, he has a responsibility to them based on a sense of physical relation through common descent In assuming the existence of a spiritual hierarchy of being, there at once emerges an idea wholly undemocratic and, at the same time, wholly necessary for the evolutionary ascent: *noblesse oblige*. This is no illusory concept to bolster the human ego. (*Science, Animals and Evolution* Greenwood, 1980)."

—*Theosophy*, 'On the Lookout', August 1981

150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY (AUGUST 12, 1831) FOUNDER OF THE MODERN THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT



WHAT DISTINGUISHED THINKERS SAID ABOUT HER BOOKS

THE SECRET DOCTRINE, the Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy

"Some of our ablest scientists, Albert Einstein and Robert Millikan are said to have had **THE SECRET DOCTRINE** on their table all the time."

The Journal of San Diego History, Summer, 1974

THEODORE ROSZAK, social historian, writes in chapter "Madame Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine" in his book *The Unfinished Animal* (Harper & Row, 1975): Her books reveal "the first philosophy of psychic and spiritual evolution to appear in the modern West. . . . One of the great liberated ladies of her day — she could not help but draw withering, critical fire by her every act and word, especially when she presumed to challenge the most entrenched intellectual orthodoxies of the age. Still today people who have never read a line she wrote remain adamantly convinced she was a fraud and a crank. . . . Above all she is among the world's trailblazing psychologists of the visionary mind."

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS, British author, jurist, judge, and Buddhist philosopher: "In Buddhism I saw the road, but why is it there? I remember stopping in the street in Cambridge and demanding loudly, 'Buddhism won't do, dammit, it won't do! Who am I and what am I revolving in this particular universe?' I found my Plan in *The Secret Doctrine*. This for the first time gave me what seemed to me then, and seems to me now, a clear exposition of the coming into being of the universe and the genesis and meaning of man. Here was a map of becoming." (*The Middle Way*, Aug. 1969)

GEORGE RUSSELL (AE), Irish author and editor, writing to Sean O'Faolain: "The real source of H.P. Blavatsky's influence is to be found in *The Secret Doctrine*. It is one of the most exciting and stimulating books written for the last hundred years. Yeats, Maeterlinck, Sir William Crookes (the greatest chemist of modern times, who was a member of her society), and scholars and scientists in many countries, read

H.P. Blavatsky's books. Dip into 'The Proem' to *The Secret Doctrine*, and you will understand the secret of the influence of that extraordinary woman on her contemporaries which still persists strong as ever, as I have found over here [in London] among many intellectuals and well-known writers."

Two editions of THE SECRET DOCTRINE:

2 volumes in one, 1500 pages, original 1888 edition (cloth) \$14.00, with separate index, \$19.00 set. Order from the Theosophy Company, 245 W. 33rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90007, or its New York office, 347 E. 72nd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

2 volumes, with separate 500 page index and bibliography, new 1979 edition (cloth), \$40.00 boxed set. Order from the Theosophical Publishing House, P.O. Drawer 270, Wheaton, Illinois, 60187.

ISIS UNVEILED, a Master-key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology, 2 volumes in one, 1300 pages (cloth) (1st edition sold out in 10 days!) \$12.50

ALFRED R. WALLACE, co-author with Darwin of the theory of evolution, wrote to H.P. Blavatsky regarding **ISIS UNVEILED**: "I am amazed at the vast amount of erudition displayed in these handsome volumes and the great interest of the topics on which they treat. Opens a whole world of new ideas and cannot fail to be of the greatest value." (Jan. 1, 1878)

WILLIAM STEWART ROSS remarked in *The Agnostic Journal* of which he was editor: "Anyone with the capacity to recognize human greatness and to discern the *Shekinah* light of Genius, could not fail to know that the world held only one Madame Blavatsky. She had that overflow of soul which falls to the lot of few. . . . In spite of her tremendous attainments and unrivaled talent, she had not a vestige of pedantic assumption, and had the simple heart of a child. 'Impostor' indeed! She was almost the only mortal I have ever met who was not an impostor." For evidence, he said, "read *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, and *The Key to Theosophy*."

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE, from the Book of the Golden Precepts (Tibetan), translated and annotated by H.P.B., 114 pages (fabricoid) \$3.00

Dr. D.T. SUZUKI, renowned Zen Buddhist teacher, observed in his review of William Kingsland's biography *The Real H.P. Blavatsky*: "The Voice of the Silence is true Mahayana Buddhist doctrine. Undoubtedly Madame Blavatsky had in some way been initiated into the deeper side of Mahayana teaching. She did more than any other single individual to bring to the West a knowledge of Eastern religious philosophy."

THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY, A dialogue between an inquirer and a theosophist; explains fundamental theosophical principles, 150 pages (cloth) \$6.00

GANDHI remarked in his *Autobiography* that as a young man "this book stimulated in me the desire to read books on Hinduism, and disabused me of the notion fostered by the missionaries that Hinduism was rife with superstition." His biographer, Louis Fischer, records Gandhi as informing him that "Theosophy is the brotherhood of man. Theosophy is the teaching of Madame Blavatsky. It is Hinduism at its best."

Gandhi could have added that Theosophy is equally interested in Western religions. It aims to merge ALL the world's religions, philosophies and sciences into one unified whole by uncovering the essential truths underlying each of them.

ORDER BOOKS FROM:

The Theosophy Company, 245 W. 33rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90007, or its New York office, 347 E. 72nd St., New York, N.Y. 10021; or from your local bookstore. Free catalog of other works by H.P. Blavatsky mailed upon request.

The *East-West Journal* in its December 1981 issue will carry the above ad. It also has an additional quote, omitted here for lack of space, from Dr. Paul Weinzwieg, past director of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. (For this added assessment of H.P.B. readers are referred to the centerfold of our January 1981 *Eclectic*.) Members and friends of the Theosophical Movement will rejoice at this practical effort to make widely known something of the great work of H.P. Blavatsky, and will be grateful to the anonymous gift-giver who has made it possible.

Reader's Notebook

A BEAUTY ALL ITS OWN

The leaves have fallen from our liquid amber. The branches stand bare and clear against the winter blue. They have a beauty all their own ... And this is old age, a yearly revelation. And so should be our own age. The leaves of Spring are gone, the colors of fall dropped; the character stands stark and clear against the background of life. We then know what we are—or we should know something. The graces and embroideries of Spring are a memory. The basic core of character shows bare, and we know what fundamental of be-ness we carry with us before the seasons bring our next Spring. It is a time of Truth, free from emotion, unperturbed, revealing a little more of the mystery that is ourself.

The voice of old age in itself is nothing to be admired or given subservience to, even though it permits the individual to speak out uncaring of praise or blame. But the experience it brings permitting perspective and wise judgment and an ability to view the whole of life of many decades should invite respect. In a way this aging time serves as a preview to that moment of honesty when the Individual, leaving the earth-stage, steps beyond its limits and what we call death takes over. For that flashing moment we see ourselves *as we are*, unaffected by our whims, desires, dreams, wishes—*as we truly are*.

Far away? But inevitable. The younger in years, however, need not wait for hastening age. Wise introspection can be cultivated long before the joints grow stiff. What it calls for is honesty, a determined honesty, with oneself, that rare and most neglected quality, one of the great qualities in any aspirant's life.

—Ardath Droon

The Stately Voyage of Mellow Perfection

Speaking of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*—that of course is the play with which *The Tempest* most instantly challenges comparison. These are the two in which the Life-teacher leads us into the realms of Faerie. Hazlitt says that the former is the greater poem, the latter the greater play; but this judgment, especially the second dictum of it, is very disputable. *Midsummer Night* is the fresh adventure of the Boy-Poet into Fairyland (near Athens-on-Avon in Warwickshire); he riots there irresponsible in company with a pack of hempen homespuns whose antics keep his sides gloriously shaking;—but *The Tempest* is the stately voyage of mellow perfection and maturity, through magical seas beyond the sunset. For irresponsibility you have a grave and tender wisdom; and the fairies, that were before but petulant poetic children, are now right fairies—lovely apparitions, incomprehensible, beneficent and exquisite spirits of the vasty deep ...

—Kenneth Morris in 'The Tempest'
in Point Loma Publication Study No. 7

BOOK REVIEWS

OM, The Secret of Ahbor Valley, by Talbot Mundy, Point Loma Publications, Inc. 392 pp. \$7.25

First published in the U.S. in 1924, this remarkable work of fiction was acquired by Hutchinson in 1925, and in the same year ran into six editions. Several well-known journals in their reviews described it as a second *Kim*, but some of them, pointing out that it lacks Kipling's out-of-date Imperialism, gave *OM* precedence. This story of an Englishman who travels with a most lovable old Lama into the Hills goes deeper into the Wisdom than works of such fiction generally attain, and I can only think, in this genre, of Mrs. Adam Beck's *The Garden of Vision*, now, alas, long out of print.

So for long was *OM*, and having read my own copy of 1925 some dozen times, I fought for many years to get it republished, and am delighted to see it in print again that others may benefit by the Wisdom of the old Lama which stems via its author's friend, Mrs. Katherine Tingley, from the same source as *The Secret Doctrine* of H.P.B.

Perhaps it was here that I developed my love of spiritual climbing, for, as the Lama explains, "He who would understand the Plains must ascend the Eternal Hills, where man's eyes scan infinity, but he who would make use of understanding must descend on to the Plains, where Past and Future meet and men have need of him."

Or again, when Ommony begins to speak of sacrifice, the Lama interrupts to say, "My son, there is no such thing as sacrifice, except in the imagination. There is opportunity to serve, and he who overlooks it robs himself. Would you call the sun's light sacrifice?" The story is concerned with the training of a new teacher of the Wisdom to those with ears to hear, in this case a young woman, and the wise old Lama, knowing he will soon be killed for doing what he knew was right, became prophetic, in words which are still more apt today: "There is a great change coming—although this is Kali Yuga, and it is not wisdom to expect too much. The harvest takes care of itself—none knows how many generations hence. This is the time for the sowing of the seeds of thought on which a whole world's destiny depends. I have sown my handful. I can sow no more." Would I were worthy to adopt this as my own epitaph.

—Christmas Humphreys in *Buddhism in England*

Word Wisdom in the Esoteric Tradition. Classes in Basic Theosophical Teaching, by G. de Purucker. Published 1980 by Point Loma Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 6507, San Diego, California, 92106. 159 pp. Soft-cover, Price \$5.95.

This is a verbatim transcript of seven lectures delivered by Gottfried de Purucker to a study class of members of the

Point Loma Theosophical Society during December, 1913 and January, 1914.

The lectures form what might be described as an introductory course to a study of Theosophy. In this instance, however, Dr. de Purucker did not take the usual approach; instead, he dealt principally with the meanings of various fundamental terms—a very useful background for the studies that apparently were to follow. Needless to say, he was not concerned with dictionary definitions, except in passing, but used the words as springboards from which to elaborate on various philosophical and religious concepts.

Incidentally, most of the subjects he dealt with in these discourses derive from the Western, rather than the Eastern tradition, which is surprising in view of his better known works. As well as the information that was imparted, the overall effect of these lectures is to put the Judaic-Christian tradition into a much more realistic perspective than is usually the case.

It must have been a privilege to attend Dr. de Purucker's classes. His erudition is well known from his many published works; and his teaching ability is attested to by the number and quality of students he inspired, who themselves became knowledgeable and effective teachers of Theosophy in later years. Although the printed word cannot convey the dynamic element of classroom instruction, yet at least something of this comes alive in these pages.

A feature of the Point Loma Community was the quality of Theosophical and general education. Moreover, its members maintained a seriousness of purpose the equal of which would be difficult to find anywhere. Both these standards are to be inferred from this book, and are summed up in an opening statement by the lecturer: "The study ... will demand the exercise of all the faculties with which we as men have been blessed—intellectual, spiritual and moral."

The usefulness of *Word Wisdom in the Esoteric Tradition* would have been enhanced with the inclusion of an index. Nevertheless, it provides interesting and informed reading, and is a welcome second volume in Point Loma Publication's "Study Series."

—Ted G. Davy, *The Canadian Theosophist*,
July-Aug. 1981

Quest for Truth, by Bernhard Mollenhauer, Ph.D. (H.C.)
Sukumar Bose, Calcutta, India, 1981.

"Philosophy is the highest music," the author quotes Plato in his *Phaedo*, heading one of the chapters of this *Quest for Truth*. And there is something aptly fitting in the unsounded depths of the aphorism when applied to this collection of eight studies, since Bernhard Mollenhauer is the grandson of the founder of the N.Y. Conservatory of

Music and the son of a noted violinist, Dr. Mollenhauer's talents, however, placed more emphasis on philosophy than music, though in earlier years he was a student at the Isis Conservatory of Music at the Point Loma Theosophical Headquarters, and here in this careful selection of theses we find what could be called a philosophical distillation of life's experience, as channeled through a study of such philosophers as Spinoza, W.E. Hocking, Alfred North Whitehead, Bishop Berkeley, Josiah Royce, and George Howison. Chapters include also "Some Key Transitions in Greek Thought," "The Dual Aspect of Knowledge," "Changing Human Value," and two unpublished letters of Professor W.E. Hocking. Altogether the thoughtful reader will find here a challenging yet most persuasive study.

The author recently received Honorary Life Membership in the Hegel Society of America. He has also been awarded the Certificate of Merit for distinguished service to philosophical literature, and is listed in the Dictionary of International Biography (London). He is a member of the Metaphysical Society of America, the Royal Philosophical Society (Glasgow), Canadian Philosophical Association, and the Indian Academy of Philosophy (Calcutta).

Dr. Sumkumar Bose, publisher and editor, introduces each chapter with brief commentary and he also has an introductory Editorial Note. The book is dedicated to Tekla Mollenhauer, "my dear wife and faithful partner in life's unrelenting years", from whom this booklet and also a second one titled *Quest for Peace* may be obtained (3614 Third Avenue, San Diego, Calif. 92103). The price is \$2.00; please add postage.

—Thomas Nugent

ITEMS OF INTEREST

DEATH OF ELSIE BENJAMIN

September 25th marked the death of Elsie Benjamin in Worthing, England, known throughout the theosophical world as Editor of the CFL (Corresponding Fellows Lodge) *Bulletin*. A third generation Theosophist, her paternal grandparents had diplomas signed by H.P. Blavatsky and H.S. Olcott. In December 1900 the Savage family came to Point Loma, California, where the children were educated in the Raja Yoga School and Theosophical University. In the later years of Katherine Tingley's life Elsie accompanied her on several lecture tours as private secretary, and became private secretary to G. de Purucker during the 13 years of the latter's leadership of the Point Loma T.S. In 1943, during WWII she returned to England, and married Harry Benjamin, well known for his books on health and nutrition. She immediately started a Theosophical Correspondence Course, and soon thereafter, with her husband as President, founded Corresponding Fellows Lodge of Theosophists. In *Bulletin*, January 1975, we find these words by a contributor, E.A. Davies: "Many thanks for the work of all those in the Lodge who serve without asking reward or even looking for results; and New Year Greetings to all students of Theosophy wherever they may be." We

echo that today in sending to CFL President Mrs. Margaret Duncan-Miller and all Lodge members our best wishes for continuing the great work Elsie loved and devoted her life to.

Mrs. Benjamin is survived by two sisters, Madeline Clark and Helen Todd, and a brother Arthur W., all living in California. To them and all her family go our most understanding sympathy.

ANNUAL CONVENTION AT THE HAGUE

The Autumn 1981 number of *Lucifer* (organ of International Study-Center for Independent Search for Truth), The Hague, reports that "once again it was a great success, in spite of the enforced absence of Elsie Benjamin. Some 150 members, followers of courses and subscribers to *Lucifer*, filled the hall in Hotel Babylon. Of the many interesting articles (and pictures) one by D.J.P. Kok seems particularly pertinent. In translation it might be titled "Advice to Scientists: Come to Your Senses!"

"G.deP.", he says, "was in his time able to attract quite a few scientists to the T.S. by comparing scientific facts with theosophical teachings. But it appears that scientists have so far maintained a materialistic point of view. The entire world is astounded by their intellectual achievements, but man is still not able to preserve peace. Scientists claim to work for the benefit of mankind in analyzing bacteria, but as is the case with DNA-technics, they pay no heed to the effects on the inner spheres, which would lead them to the conclusion that their technology threatens to destroy material life on earth ... Mankind in general nearly worships its science, not being able to visualize the disasters that the purely technological approach may bring about. With a view to the scores of people engaged in materialistic science we realize that the 150 idealists here present are far out-numbered. The Law must take its course, but still even a relatively small group of idealists may neutralize some of the disasters that mankind brings on itself"

UNITY IN A COMMON TASK

Prof. J.H. Dubbink, Bilthoven, Holland, writes: "A group of Theosophists from the ULT, Adyar, and group(s) of Puruckerians will bring out a new translation of *The Voice of Silence* in commemoration of the 150th birthday of H.P.B. The work of translation has been done by one of the ULT and me. Twice a week we devote two days of five hours work on the translation ... All participants in this work feel very happy to experience the unity in practical work of people who never could have found that unity without having to perform a common task."

THE DALAI LAMA AT WHEATON HEADQUARTERS

The visit of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama to the American Headquarters of the T.S. (Adyar) at Wheaton, Illinois, is reported in the Aug-Sept. issue of *The American Theosophist*. A summary of his talk to about three-hundred members gathered outside on the grounds at Olcott is given by Renee Weber, who ends her report: "But what remained most of all was the sense that we had seen and heard a man

who—in the words of Dora Kunz, as she publicly thanked him that evening—was the living embodiment of compassion."

THEOSOPHIC STUDY PROJECT

The Theosophic Studies Project at California Institute of Integral Studies was launched in 1978 with principal funding from the Kern Foundation. Its purposes are to extend contemporary understanding of theosophical principles and relate that understanding to concepts and practices of philosophy, religion, and modern depth psychology.

Among representative courses offered are: Modern Theosophy in Historical Perspective; The Perennial Psychology; Theosophical Psychology: A Beginning Exploration; Theosophy and Psychosynthesis; Theosophy and Therapy.

—The above, and the following item are reprinted from *The Canadian Theosophist*, May-June 1981

KROTONA FALL PROGRAM

Radha Burnier, International President of the Theosophical Society, and President of Krotona Institute, will preside at the opening of the Fall Semester of the School of Theosophy on Saturday, September 12, 1981.

Among the outstanding speakers who will contribute to the Fall Program are:

Dr. Henryk Skolimowski, widely known developer of Eco-Philosophy as a basis for the new cosmological unity, who will return and further develop his theories.

Dr. Richard Silberstein, Professor of Biophysics in Australia, and *Dr. Abbas Hussain*, Professor at the University of Pakistan and deep student of Sufism, who will be guest speakers for the semester. The complete Fall Program will be available in August. For further information write: Krotona Institute School of Theosophy, 46 Krotona Hill, Ojai, California 93023, USA.

ADDITIONS TO POINT LOMA PUBLICATIONS STUDIES

Ready for Fall distribution are the following added to P.L. Publication's Study Series:

No. 5: *The Stanzas of Dzyan*: Notes for Study and Discussion on Cosmogogenesis and Anthropogenesis. —By Elsie Benjamin

No. 6: *A Study of the Whole of Man*

I: The Significance of the Seven Principles of Man

II: The Significance of the Monad

—By Elsie Benjamin

No. 7: *Mirrors of the Hidden Wisdom*: Threads of Theosophy in Literature—I

—By Henry T. Edge, Kenneth Morris, Philip A. Malpas, W. Emmett Small

No. 8: *Man at Home in the Universe*: A Study of the Great Evolutionary Cycle: The "Globes", the "Rounds", the "Races", "Root-Races" and "Sub-Races"

—By Elsie Benjamin

Complete Catalog from Point Loma Publications, Inc. on request.

FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

Comment on *Eclectic Theosophist*, No. 65, special commemorative issue 150th anniversary of HPB's birth:

Anna K. Winner, Rockville, Md.—Everything in this issue is worth reading, but the special thing which made me want to get it to send to many of my 'adopted' or spiritual children or old friends is the long article by A.P. Sinnett. I have read many books about Blavatsky's life, and many books by her including explanations of the purpose of the Theosophical Society, but I have never before seen such a clear *short* review of her whole life, *and* of the fact that the purposes of the Hierarchy were behind her. The Hierarchy and all the people who are interested in Their purposes, if they can read this issue, ought to be very grateful to you for publishing this.

Dr. D.J. Dubbink, Bilthoven, Holland—Excellent, *sádhū*—as a Hindu would say! In the October issue of our *Theosofia* I will publish some lines on the historic value of that issue.

Vonda Urban, Irene Stashinski, Chicago, Ill.—We just loved it; it was superb!

Evangeline D. Farrell, Fair Lawn, N.J.—Your No. 65 *Eclectic Theosophist* was just beautiful!

Lorraine L. Longacre, Orangevale, Calif.—Thank you for reprinting the wonderful article about HPB.

Dorothy LeGros, Corunna, Michigan—I especially enjoyed the July-October issue of *Eclectic* with its ever-inspiring articles on the life of HPB, that great and staunch soul.

Jalie N. Shore, Denver, Colorado—The whole number is, I think, quite a worthy undertaking and contribution to Theosophical literature. It will be greatly appreciated by younger members, I should think. Sometimes it is so difficult for new members to get an integrated grasp of the history of the organization.

Abbott Englehardt, Pomona, Calif.—To me *The Eclectic Theosophist* is an outstanding publication and the work done is impressive. I was particularly touched by "Thoughts Stirred by the Passing of Boris de Zirkoff and by the Life of Dedicated Members of the Point Loma Theosophical Headquarters." (*Eclectic*, No. 64). We truly missed the experience of being a part of that Point Loma dedicated life. "The Courage of Our Convictions": we need more than ever today; indeed we need leaders throughout the world with the *courage of their convictions*.

Bernhard Mollenhauer, San Diego, Calif.—"Background of Our Lives" is a beautiful description of life on P.L. as we remember it. I also was at that time living in #10 Home and recall the reception K.T. had for Boris. Pioneer Cottage, where Boris lived, was near our No. 10 Home.

When I was practising tuba, Boris used to stop by and often leave a book on Russian literature. I should have connected with his new German class but somehow missed it.

Arne Hansen, Oslo, Norway—We had a successful summer school. Joy Mills was guest speaker—and she is very good. From here she went on to Germany ...

Roma Dunningham, Auckland, New Zealand—Appropos of your remarks re the Theosophical Movement and the state of the world G. said the other day "we must *saturate* the world with Theosophy," a good motto for the year, don't you think?

A Friend in Greece—I am a U.S. citizen living abroad. I am interested in having some pen-friends who share the common interests with me. I have lived in New York City, Los Angeles and Houston. W. Europe also. The address is: Mr. Agis Sarakinos, Xiou 4, Chalandri, Athens, Greece. He is an electrical engineer, MS, age 40.

MEDITATIONS—25

The Wondrous Being ... is the 'Initiator, called the "Great Sacrifice." For, sitting at the threshold of LIGHT he looks into it from within the circle of Darkness, which he will not cross; nor will he quit his post till the last day of this life-cycle. Why does the solitary Watcher remain at his self-chosen post? Why does he sit by the fountain of primeval Wisdom, of which he drinks no longer, as he has naught to learn which he does not know—aye, neither on this Earth, nor in its heaven? Because the lonely, sore-footed pilgrims on their way back to their *home* are never sure to the last moment of not losing their way in this limitless desert of illusion and matter called Earth-Life. Because he would fain show the way to that region of freedom and light, from which he is a voluntary exile himself, to every prisoner who has succeeded in liberating himself from the bonds of flesh and illusion. Because, in short, he has sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind, though but a few Elect may profit by the GREAT SACRIFICE.

—H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 207-8

CONTRIBUTIONS

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